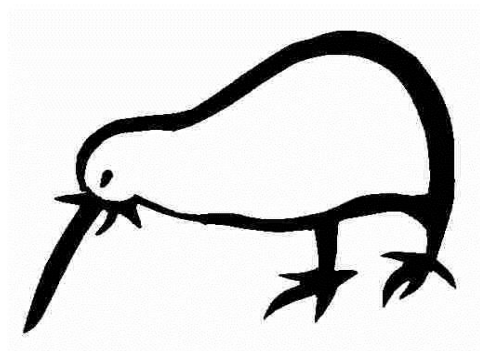


APTERYX

Issue 37

December 2013

Photos:
Detlef Davies (DD)
Les Feasey
Bill Campbell



BIRDS NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER FAR NORTH REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

www.osnz.org.nz

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Between August and the end of the year members and friends have taken part in several field activities including 3 beach patrols, a weekend wader count and 3 pelagic trips out of Whangaroa Harbour. There has been just one indoor meeting and it will be important in 2014 to find someone, if not to become Regional Rep, at least to organise indoor meetings on a regular basis, find a new venue and find people willing to speak on bird-related subjects. The room in the library in Kerikeri which we have occasionally used, now costs \$50 so an alternative room would be good. We hope the use of the Christian Centre in Mangonui will continue to be our northern alternative a few times a year.

Shining Cuckoo in our garden in October 2013. It has been a good season for this species with records from many places, even Te Pahi. (DD)



**The Far North Regional Officers
are:**

Regional Representative This position is vacant & the region needs a new RR.	Newsletter Editor Detlef Davies, 180 Landing Road, Kerikeri 09 407 3874 detlefdavies@yahoo.com
Regional Recorder Laureen Alston, 48a Riverview Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8747 lm.alston@kinect.co.nz NOTE LAUREEN'S NEW EMAIL ADDRESS	Treasurer Isabella Godbert, 67 Waipapa West Road, Kerikeri 09 407 8058 godbert@xtra.co.nz

RECENT EVENTS

11th Nov – Whangaroa Pelagic – See page 9

12th Nov – Whangaroa Pelagic – See page 10

24th Nov – Wader Count, Parengarenga & Kowhai – See pages 4 - 5

19 Dec – Meeting, Kerikeri - CJ Ralph gave a presentation on 'Changes in birdlife resulting from predator control in the Eastern Bay of Islands' – a relevant topic in the light of the work being done in the Eastern Bay of Islands.

23 Dec – Whangaroa Pelagic – See page 10

PROGRAMME

At present there is no programme of events as such and the region seeks an organiser. If further events, including field trips, are planned, they will be communicated by email.

RECENT REPORTS and SIGHTINGS

These records cover the period from mid-September to the end of December 2013 unless otherwise stated. Contributors include Anthea Goodwin (AJG), Bill Campbell (BC), CJ Ralph (CJR), Craig Salmon, Detlef & Carol Davies (DD, CD, DCD), Gary Little, Gerald Messenger (GM), Isabella & Derry Godbert (IG), Jenny Atkins, Kevin Matthews (KM), Les Feasey (LF), Richard Tamaho, Robin Booth, Teri Seon, Terry Bunn, Theresa Vujcich, Trudy Crerar. **WP = Whangaroa Pelagic**

Australian Little Grebe, Stanners Road (Les Feasey)



North Island Brown Kiwi – heard Rangikapiti in Sept, otherwise none reported outside usual sites, heard recently in Opuia Forest and adjacent land. Juv at Aroha Island in daylight in late Dec (CD).

New Zealand Dabchick – up to 3 Lake Waiporohita, 8 pairs Lake Rotokawau 11 Oct, 8 Stanners Road Lake 11 Nov (LF).

Australian Little Grebe – 1 to 2 L. Waiporohita, 8 pairs Lake Rotokawau 11 Oct, 1 on lake on Purerua 17 Nov & in Stanners Road 11 Nov (LF).

Wandering (Gibson's) Albatross – WP: 2 on 11 Nov, 1 on 12 Nov, 2 on 23 Dec.

White-capped Albatross – 1 W off Cape Reinga 11 Oct, WP: 4 on 11 Nov, 3 on 12 Nov, 4 on 23 Dec.

Giant Petrel sp. – 2 off South Head, Hokianga 12 Oct.

Buller's Shearwater – common on all 3 pelagics.

Flesh-footed Shearwater - common on all 3 pelagics, seen off Cape Reinga.

Sooty Shearwater – WP: 2 on 11 Nov, 1 on 23 Dec, several off Te Werahi Beach 23 Nov.

Short-tailed Shearwater – WP: c.10 on 11 Nov, c.15 on 12 Nov, 3 on 23 Dec, many beach-wrecked birds.

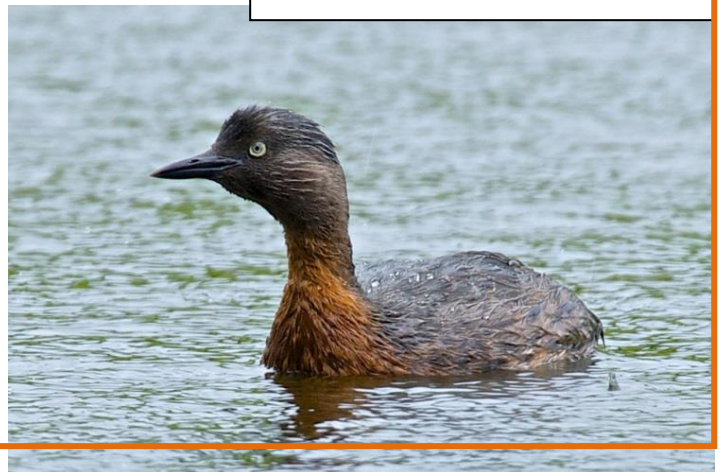
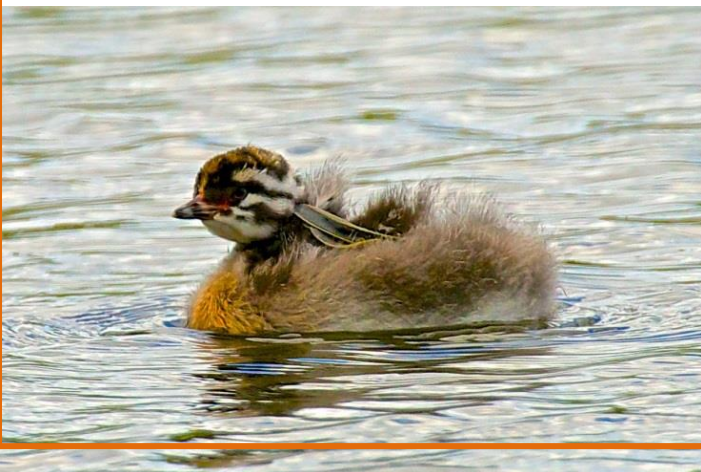
Fluttering Shearwater – often off Cable Bay & Tokerau Beach, many on pelagics (1500 estimated on 12 Nov).

Hutton's Shearwater – c.20 estimated with Flutterers on WPs.

Little Shearwater - WP: 6 on 11 Nov, 10 on 12 Nov, 1 on 23 Dec.

New Zealand Dabchick & a chick with its feet lying over its back.

Photos by Les Feasey at Stanners Road Lake, Kerikeri, 11 Nov 2013





Common Diving Petrel - WP: 100+ on 11 Nov, 120+ on 12 Nov, 3 on 23 Dec.

Black (Parkinson's) Petrel - WP: 6 on 11 Nov, 1 on 12 Nov, 2 on 23 Dec.

Fairy Prion - WP: 1 on 11 Nov, 4 on 23 Dec.

Cook's Petrel - WP: 4 on 11 Nov, 20+ on 12 Nov, c.10 on 23 Dec.

Pycroft's Petrel - WP: 3 on 11 Nov, c.10 on 12 Nov.

Grey-faced Petrel - WP: 1 feeding beside boat on 23 Dec.

White-faced Storm Petrel - one off Cape Reinga 11 Oct; up to 100 on WPs

New Zealand Storm Petrel - 1 on WP 23 Dec.

Little Penguin - 1 came ashore at South Head 12 Oct; WP:12 near Stephenson Is.12 Nov. Often seen coming ashore near the Mangonui Fish & Chip Shop. Two half hour periods of beach patrol on 90 mile Beach produced 27 & 19 tracks respectively, the highest for some years (IG)

White Heron (Great Egret) - up to 5 at Unahi Road in Oct, 1+ in Dec (KM, DCD).

Little Egret - 2 in roadside wetland south of Rawene 28 Sept, 1 there 12 Oct (DCD).

Cattle Egret - 5 in paddock south of Waipapa 8 Oct & 2 to 4 there subsequently.

White-faced Heron - a pure white one near Pakaraka 26 Dec (DCD)

Reef Heron - 1 Taipa 24 Oct.

Australasian Bittern - Skudders Beach Reserve, Kerikeri: heard booming on many dates, seen by visitors on 2 dates in Oct. One seen Waikare Marae (Russell) 21 Dec (Craig Salmon).

Australian Pelican - Cable Bay: 1 riding the thermals westwards on 11 July (Terry Bunn); 6 seen flying over Doubtless Bay in Oct (?) - seen from Midgeley Road opp turning to Hihi Beach (Trudy Crerar). 5 reported from Marble Bay in Oct (?) (per Radar Rattler)

Royal Spoonbill - up to 9 near the Old Oak, Mangonui Harbour, June to Sept (AJG, BC), 5 Taipa 11 July (Stephen Tansey). Unahi Road - still c.150 roosting in October with many in breeding plumage.

Black Swan - 313 (& some cygnets) counted on lake west of SH1 south of Cape Reinga on 23 Nov.

Cape Barren Goose - Stephenson Island: 4 on 11 Nov, 3 on 12 Nov from WP (DD).

Grey Duck - c.20 pure-looking ones at Rawene Oxidation Ponds 28 Sept & 12 Oct, pair on lake south of Henderson Beach Road on 25 Nov & a few on Lake Waiporohita (where hybrid family with young).

Australasian Shoveler - c.35 Rawene Oxidation Ponds 28 Sept & 12 Oct.

Grey Teal - 4 on lake north of Henderson Beach Road 25 Nov.

Brown Teal - regularly seen along Marsden Cross track.

New Zealand Scaup - 3 on lake south of Henderson Beach Road on 25 Nov (the only report).

Spotless Crake - heard Skudders Beach Reserve, Kerikeri, heard & glimpsed Marsden Cross in Oct.

Banded Dotterel - 4 to 5 pairs Spirits Bay in Dec, one with small chick (BC), 4 Kowhai Beach 25 Nov.

New Zealand Dotterel - widely reported, breeding at Tapuaetahi, Maitai Bay, Taipa Resort & Point.

Lesser Knot - good counts from Parengarenga & Kowhai, see chart on page 5.

Albino White-faced Heron at Pakaraka (left) and Little Egret at Rawene (right).

Two small white herons but hardly confusable on a good view - note face and eye-colour.
Photos: DD

Wrybill – 20 Parengarenga / Kokota 24 Nov.
Pacific Golden Plover – 8 Kowhai Beach 25 Nov (DD).
Turnstone - good counts from Parengarenga & Kowhai, see chart on page 5.
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper – 1 with the large wader flock on Kokota Sandspit, 24 Nov (DD).
Bar-tailed Godwit – good counts from Parengarenga & Kowhai, see chart on page 5.
Caspian Tern – few recorded in many places but trend seems to be downward.
Arctic Skua – WP: 1 on 12 Nov.
White-fronted Tern – many nesting on the derelict boat at Unahi road boat ramp.
New Zealand Pigeon - 2 pairs feeding daily on loquats Mill Bay Mangonui. Also watched feeding on young leaves of Morning Glory. (AJG et al).
Kaka – Kerikeri: up to 5 visiting gardens in Kerikeri Road and Kendall Roads between May & August (Theresa Vujcich, Richard Tamaho), Whakaangi: 1 early November, 2 on 23 Dec.
Shining Cuckoo – Very vocal in many places from mid-September, as far north as Te Paki; some 'parties' reported, still singing at New Year.
Morepork – using nest box at Taumarumaru Reserve, Coopers Beach in November (as last year) (GM).
New Zealand Pipit – reports from Diggers Valley Road (Te Ngahere iti), Cape Reinga & Marsden Cross.
Fernbird – reported from Lake Ohia, Skudders Beach Reserve, Otangaroa Road, Opua & Waipoua Forests, Kaipatiki Road (Haruru-Waitangi).
Whitehead – birds on Moturoa Island are spreading so keep eyes and ears open elsewhere.
Tomtit – singing at Rangikapiti between Aug & Oct (AG), also well reported Puketi, Opua, Waipoua, Diggers Valley.
North Island Robin – reduction in numbers on Moturoa Island reported (CJR)

ORIENTAL PLOVER

Detlef Davies

Most records of unusual species (other than seabirds) visiting New Zealand involve birds which we have seen many times elsewhere, but when we heard that an Oriental Plover had made landfall not too far south of Auckland, it was worth the effort to go and see. This species breeds in parts of Asia and winters in northern Australia but generally in the wilderness of the north-west. As my only previous sighting anywhere was on Heron Island in 1979, it was a pleasure to see this bird at Port Waikato on 1st October, in company with other birders, one of whom had flown up from Nelson.



Oriental Plover – Port Waikato (DD)

WADER CENSUS – PARENGARENGA & KOWHAI

Detlef Davies

This took place over 24th and 25th November, probably the most successful Far North wader count undertaken for many years. However, the contrast between the highly unapproachable birds at Parengarenga and the tame birds at Kowhai was as marked as ever.



Godwits. Knot & Turnstones. Kowhai Beach. Nov 2013 (DD)

Ornithological Society of New Zealand - WADER CENSUSES					
OSNZ REGION	Far North		MAIN SITE	Parengarenga Harbour, Kowhai Beach	
YEAR	2013		COMPILER	Detlef Davies	
MONTH	November		COUNTERS	Detlef & Carol Davies, Isabella Godbert, Catherine McDiarmid,	
CENSUS DATES	24 & 25 Nov			Susie Lindauer, Evan Lipton, Rae Lipton	
	DATES		24-Nov-13	24-Nov-13	25-Nov-13
	COUNTERS>		D&CD, RL, SL	EL, IG, CM	D&CD, SL
	LOCAL SITES >		Parengarenga Outer beach & dunes	Parengarenga Inner beach	Kowhai Beach
	SITE TOTALS >		4394	2983	1468
	Arctic Migratory Waders		4367	2900	1436
	Australasian Endemic Waders		27	83	32
	SPECIES v TOTALS				
Pied Oystercatcher	70			70	
Variable Oystercatcher	22		12		10
Pied Stilt	3			3	
New Zealand Dotterel	24		5		19
Banded Dotterel	3				3
Wrybill	20		10	10	
Pacific Golden Plover	8				8
Grey Plover					
Spur-winged Plover					
Turnstone	688		227	400	61
Red Knot	2936		1280	1000	656
Curlew Sandpiper					
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1		1		
Red-necked Stint					
Eastern Curlew					
Whimbrel					
Bar-tailed Godwit	5070		2859	1500	711
Black-tailed Godwit					
Grey-tailed Tattler					
Wandering Tattler					
Marsh Sandpiper					
OTHERS					
Paradise Shelduck					
White-faced Heron					
Mallard					
Pied Shag	4			3	1
Royal Spoonbill	3			3	
Black-backed Gull	80		c.70		10
Caspian Tern	3		1	2	
White-fronted Tern	2		1	1	
Common Tern					
Red-billed Gull	52		12	25	15
Little Shag	2			2	
MAIN SITE TOTAL >		8991	4478	3019	1494
WADERS ONLY >		8845	4394	2983	1468
NOTES: Bands: Kowhai - 3 orange flags on Godwits, one orange flag on a Knot.					
Parengarenga totals considered cumulative					
Some 'others' not counted. Not included in site totals but included in 'MAIN SITE TOTAL'.					
High tide was between midday & 1 pm, all counts were between 10.30 am & 4 pm.					
Seabirds wrecked on Kowhai Beach: White-capped Albatross - 1; Short-tailed Shearwater - 4; Fairy Prion - 2					
VOC and NZD probably breeding on Kowhai Beach					

BEACH PATROLS

Set out below is the report for 15th October and a summary of the patrols for 2013.

Isabella Godbert



The Ornithological Society of New Zealand

BEACH PATROL DATA SHEET

Date of Patrol: 15/10 /2013 Time of patrol 2 :45 pm District: NW

Length of beach patrolled: 16 km.

Name of beach:90 Mile..... Nearest town:

Kaitia.....

Start Point: ...Hukatere

Finish Point:16 kms North

of....Waipapakauri.....

Name and address of observer/s I and D Godbert 67 Waipapa West Road Kerikeri 0295 D and C Davies
Landing Road Kerikeri

Weather and tide (on day of patrol): Fine tide low going out

Previous weather & any general remarks: Mainly Westerly winds often strong including very strong winds 4 days before.

Evidence of oiling. No:

Species Found	No. of Birds Found	Age			Freshness		ID by
		Adult	Sub-adult	Unknown	A	B	
Wandering Albatross	1	1				1	All
Mollymawk sp.	1	1				1	All
Bullers Shearwater	6	6			4	2	All
Short tailed Shearwater	239	239			160	79	All
Fluttering Shearwater	7	7				7	all
Hutton's Shearwater	3	3			1	1	I D G
Little Shearwater	1	1				1	all
Common Diving Petrel	4	4			4		all
Fairy Prion	1	1			1		all
Thin-billed Prion	1	1			1		IG
White headed Petrel	1	1			1		DG
Little Blue Penguin	1	1			1		DD
Australasian Gannet	4	4			2	2	all
Black backed Gull	2	2				2	all
Red billed Gull	1	1				1	all
White faced storm Petrel	4	4				4	all
Total No. of birds found	277						

MONTH	Mar 9th	Sep 1st	Oct 15th	Dec 14th
DISTANCE	30 kms	28 kms	15 kms	22 kms
Beach	90 mile	90 mile	90 mile	90 mile
Wandering Albatross			1	
Shy Mollymawk		2		
Mollymawk sp.		1	1	
Northern Giant Petrel		1		
Hutton's Shearwater			3	
Buller's Shearwater			6	3
Sooty Shearwater				49
Short-tailed Shearwater			239	89
Fluttering Shearwater		4	7	15
Little Shearwater	1		1	
Common Diving Petrel		1	4	
Thin-billed Prion			1	
Fairy Prion		2	1	
White-headed Petrel		1	1	
White-faced Storm Petrel		2	4	
Blue Penguin	1		1	3
Australasian Gannet	3	2	4	3
Southern Black backed Gull	3	1	2	
Red billed Gull			1	
Pied Shag				1
Total	8	17	277	163

RECENT NESTS

Bill Campbell



FERNBIRD – Lake Ohia

Bill was lucky enough to find all 3 nests in the same season.



**VARIABLE
OYSTERCATCHER
Spirits Bay**



**SKYLARK
Lake Ohia /
Landcorp area**

BAY BUSH ACTION

Les Feasey

I emailed Bay Bush Action asking about stoat traps, having been referred by the Department of Conservation in Kerikeri. Craig Salmon came by a couple of days later with a gift – a stoat trap and some bait I subsequently deployed on our property that borders the Opuia State Forest.

In the last year Craig and Brad, who are the Trustees of Bay Bush Action, have;

- Participated in the Paihia beach cleanup;
- Built 30 little blue penguin nesting boxes, and with the help and involvement of Paihia school children deployed these boxes;
- Built and deployed Kiwi houses which are now occupied with breeding kiwis;
- Expanded the predator free area in Opuia State Forest by 110 hectares, so the total is now 260 hectares;
- Enrolled landowners around Opuia State Forest, including people in Waitangi, Paihia and Opuia to participate in conservation efforts;
- Met with several community groups to promote the preservation of our native wildlife, including the contentious issue of feral cats in Opuia State Forest and the use of the beach cleaner on Paihia beaches, which could potentially destroy breeding New Zealand Dotterel nests.

Have a look at their web site: www.baybushaction.org.nz

I walked some of the trapping trails that Craig and Brad have established for pest control. They have done a remarkable job at installing bait stations and possum, rat and stoat traps. Their extensive knowledge of the bush life and birds in the Opuia State Forest helped me. I particularly wanted to photograph a Tomtit, and they took me to a site where much to my surprise and delight, a tomtit obligingly landed on a branch within three meters. Here is a photo of the tomtit.



Subsequently I have installed quite a few possum, stoat, and rat traps around my property. Thus far my possum count is up to sixteen!

Opuia State Forest is a large block (4294.1 ha) of regenerating bush with huge ancient trees growing in the valleys. It has many streams and lots of untouched wetlands nestled within it. It is situated just behind Waitangi, Paihia and Opuia townships and has a very temperate climate.

Looking at it from a distance it looks like a big regenerating block of Kanuka and Tanekaha forest, but when you walk in to the valleys you are surrounded by a huge jungle like forest: kiekie, matai, supplejack, miro, rimu, tawa and kauri - just to name a few of the plants that are present.

The significance of this forest lies in its large size, coastal influences and mosaic vegetation types. It is the major national stronghold of the rare *Pittosporum pimeleoides*, and the uncommon coastal tree, *Tawaroa* (Wright 1984) that occur here in good numbers.

A popular walking track, much used by visitors from New Zealand and overseas, runs through the middle of Opuia State Forest from Schoolhouse Road in Paihia to Oromahoe Road.

WHANGAROA PELAGICS – Nov & Dec

1 - Mon 11th November

Day trip with Anders Nielssen, Gail McKiernan, Barry Cooper, Sally Wex, Ross Silcock, David Stewart, Sheena Gillman and Tony Palliser. Left harbour at 7 am. Misty along road but harbour clear, cloud 10%. Very light westerly wind. In harbour, [Pied Shags](#) (incl. imm), both [gulls](#), [White-fronted Tern](#) (2), [Australasian Gannet](#) (6+).

Harbour mouth to Stephenson Island

[Little Penguin](#) (5), [Fluttering Shearwater](#) (10+), [Gannet](#) (10+), 4 [Cape Barren Geese](#) on the hilltop on Stephenson Island, also in flight. Barry had 2 probable [Fur Seals](#).

Stephenson Island to chumming spot

Huge raft of several hundred [Fluttering Shearwaters](#), at least 100 [Common Diving Petrels](#), most flushed by the boat, 100+ [Buller's Shearwaters](#) and 30+ [White-faced Storm Petrels](#). The first of several pterodromas today was a [Pycroft's Petrel](#), seen best and identified by Tony. 4 [Little Shearwaters](#) in flight, close enough to see white face on a couple of them. A sub-adult [White-capped Albatross](#) came past the boat but did not linger.

Chumming from 9.45 am.

Few [Flutterers](#) still around, 30+ each of [Buller's](#) & [Flesh-footed Shearwaters](#) around the boat for most of the time and c.6 [Black \(Parkinson's\) Petrels](#). 4 [Cook's Petrels](#) confidently identified, another 10 or more pterodromas were either [Cook's](#) or [Pycroft's](#). 3 more [Pycroft's Petrels](#) identified & confirmed later from photos. 1 [Fairy Prion](#), 2 [Gannets](#).

5 albatrosses visited the boat: 3 more [White-capped Albatrosses](#) separately but recognised by different bill colour, one looked like an adult; 2 [Wandering \(Gibson's\) Albatrosses](#). All spent some time on the water feeding. Only c.5 [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) (& no NZSPs)

Headed westwards c.1.30 following sea shelf. Many birds followed including [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) (increasing to c.15) and albatrosses. 2 more [Little Shearwaters](#) & 4 [Common Diving Petrels](#) seen quite well. About 10 [Common Dolphins](#) came by close to the boat, & 2 [Sunfish](#).



Route back

Stopped for a longer look at the mass of birds frantically feeding on huge shoals of fish at the surface. Thought to be at least 1000 [Flutterers](#) but several [Hutton's](#) were with them (Tony thought possibly up to 5%), also a few [Short-tailed Shearwaters](#) more easily picked out in the flock. [Buller's](#) & [Flesh-footed Shearwaters](#), at least 8 [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) and lots of [Common Diving Petrels](#) also present. Later a [Sooty Shearwater](#) flew past.

Back at wharf c.5.15 pm.



2 - Tues 12th November

Most of day trip from 7 am to 2.30 pm with Jon Hornbuckle, Keith Cowton, Dani Lopez-Velasco, Jenny Atkins and Derek Bettsworth. More overcast than yesterday & slightly more wind. [Pied Shags](#), [gulls](#) and [Gannets](#) in the harbour.



Harbour mouth to Stephenson Island

At least 12 [Little Penguins](#) including 5 together. 3 [Cape Barren Geese](#) near where the 4 were yesterday.

Stephenson Island to chumming spot.

Massive raft of [shearwaters](#) still present about a km past the island. About 1000 [Flutterers](#), some [Hutton's](#) and [Short-tailed](#). 100 or more [Common Diving Petrels](#), at least as co-operative as yesterday. [Buller's](#) (50+) and [Flesh-footed](#) (30+) [Shearwaters](#), 1 [Sooty Shearwater](#), 3 [Gannets](#). 2 [White-capped Albatrosses](#) and an imm [Wandering \(Gibson's\) Albatross](#) with dark crown and

more black on wings. About 10 [Cook's](#) and [Pycroft's Petrels](#), a few near enough to identify and about 6 [Little Shearwaters](#), some giving brief views on the water, showing white face well. About 30 [White-faced Storm Petrels](#), more evident than yesterday but still no sign of any NZ Stormies.

Chumming spot

Usual group of [Flesh-footed](#) and [Buller's Shearwaters](#) around the boat but only one [Black \(Parkinson's\) Petrel](#). Pterodromas coming closer today than yesterday so better ID opportunities; thought to be at least 20 [Cook's Petrels](#) and c.10 [Pycroft's Petrels](#). The [Wandering Albatross](#) seen earlier came to chum and one [White-capped Albatross](#) flew past. About 30 [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) stayed during chumming.

Route back – 11.30 to 2 pm

Lingered for a while at the massive seabird flock and like yesterday there were a number of [Hutton's](#) picked out, c.20 [Short-tailed Shearwaters](#) and c.100 [Common Diving Petrels](#). 4 [Little Shearwaters](#) flew swiftly away and a dark phase [Arctic Skua](#) accompanied the feeding flock. 1 [Sunfish](#). Back at wharf 2 pm.

3 - Mon 23rd December

Postponed from Friday 20th when strong south-westerlies made a sea trip unwise. Better conditions today, light south-easterlies turning to north-west by early afternoon. Overcast early on, becoming bright and sunny. Joined by CJ Ralph, Dave Boyd, Peter Mathisen and Les Feasey. Left harbour c.7.00 am, at harbour-mouth c.7.25 am.

Birds in harbour, [Gannet](#) (c.4), [Red-billed](#) and [Black-backed Gulls](#), 2 [Caspian Terns](#), a few [White-fronted Terns](#) and an [Arctic Skua](#) flying west towards hills on north side.

Stephenson Island – no penguins, nor Cape Barren Geese, 2 [Harriers](#) over the island & c.70 [Red-billed Gulls](#) on rocks by north shore. Large raft of 200 – 250 [Fluttering Shearwaters](#) on the water. As observed on November trips, the flock probably also contained some [Hutton's Shearwaters](#) but these were difficult to discern, 2 or 3 [Short-tailed Shearwaters](#) were obvious



in the group. In the vicinity were c.30 [Buller's Shearwaters](#), at least 20 [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) and a [Fairy Prion](#). We did not linger here but headed out to our usual chumming spot. There was a distant [White-capped Albatross](#) and increasing numbers of [Buller's](#) (30+) and [Flesh-footed Shearwaters](#) (20+). A single [Little Shearwater](#) made a brief appearance low over the water.

We reached the chumming spot at the edge of the deeper water c.9.15 am and various species came to investigate. At least 4 [Short-beaked Common Dolphins](#) were among the first visitors beside the boat. Albatrosses arrived quickly, 2 near-adult [Wandering \(Gibson's\) Albatrosses](#), both with a small patch of brown on the crown, one more so than the other; and 4 [White-capped Albatrosses](#), varying from near-adult to adult, younger birds having some white in the primary feathers. [Flesh-footed Shearwaters](#) were the most prominent species, 30 or more constantly at the food but probably 70+ during the day. 20 or more [Buller's Shearwaters](#) were present throughout. Only 2 [Black \(Parkinson's\) Petrels](#) seen with certainty, appearing c.10 am.

Pterodromas featured quite well again with at least 10 seen throughout the day, up to 8 flying around the area from c.10.15, eventually coming close enough for reasonable photos. Those identified were all [Cook's Petrels](#) this time; some variation in head pattern but no claimed Pycroft's.

Among the 80 or so [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) was a single [New Zealand Storm Petrel](#) appearing c.10.15 and it remained during chumming, a welcome return after being missed on the last 2 trips. Finally a single [Grey-faced Petrel](#) came in to feed with the other birds c.10.30.

Left to return to shore c.10.55 am. [Flesh-footed](#) and [Buller's Shearwaters](#) common, one [Sooty Shearwater](#) and a [Cook's Petrel](#) went past, few more [White-faced Storm Petrels](#).

On the approach to Stephenson Island, an enormous area of sea was densely packed with fish at the surface and as a result, the flock of [Fluttering Shearwaters](#) had increased to c.500, again with numerous [Buller's](#) and 3 [Short-tailed](#) with them, and some likely [Hutton's](#). Many [White-faced Storm Petrels](#) around the flock, 3 [Common Diving Petrels](#) and 3 [Fairy Prions](#). 3 [Bottlenose Dolphins](#) were riding the wake at the bows most of the way to the harbour entrance, c.10 [Pied Shags](#) in a group on the rocks & a few more [Gannets](#). Back at the wharf c.1.30 pm.



New Zealand Storm Petrel (Les Feasey)



Grey-faced Petrel (Les Feasey)

CHATHAM ISLANDS – Dec 2013

Detlef Davies

I spent a week on the Chatham Islands in early December with tour leader Ross Silcock (New Zealander living in Iowa), and fellow birders Doug Chapman from South Dakota and Ian Smith from Hawkes Bay. It was my third visit following a cruise in 2005 and two week's voluntary work in 2007. It was to be a mixture of land-based birding and boat trips.

We spent a couple of days touring main Chatham Island and managed to find all the special land birds with little difficulty. In doing so we admired many of the endemic plants, and insects like the Chatham Admiral butterfly and the Chatham Redcoat Damselfly.

But it was the smaller islands and the seabirds which were the priority and with the help of Hotel Chathams in Waitangi (the only town) we acquired a boat and 2 young 'boat-lads' to take us south to Mangere Island, Rangatira (South East Island) and Pyramid Rock.



Chatham Petrel

We had heard that there were probably still a few Chatham Snipe on the tiny Rabbit Island but a combination of the lapping of the surf on the rocks, the wind and the sheer cliffs, we aborted the idea of getting ashore here. Instead we managed to get close enough to Mangere Island to get reasonable views of several Forbes Parakeets and even a brief Black Robin. Rangatira is the home of the only 'unrelocated' Shore Plovers in the world and we had superb views of these little gems.



Chatham Albatross

Anchored off the unique Pyramid Rock for the afternoon gave us a spectacle of 1000s of Chatham Albatrosses, returning to their strange raised nest mounds; also a few Fulmar Prions; their unusual flight mode is quite unlike typical Fairy Prion. One of the only pair of Yellow-nosed Albatrosses breeding in New Zealand (on the Pyramid) came to feed by the boat.

On the last day we were treated to a tour of Sweetwater, the recently created predator-proof fenced area in the Tuku Reserve of southern Chatham Island, where both Chatham Petrel and Magenta Petrel (Chatham Island Taiko) now breed in very small numbers. There are only 12 known Taiko nests in the world & 3 are in Sweetwater. In view of our association with the islands on previous visits, we were shown both species in the hand.



Chatham Island Taiko

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